

FIVE NEW PLAYS START THE THEATRICAL DRIVE



Maud Harford and Richard Tabor
"Coat Tales" Court



Chaparral
Thirly-ninth
Street
Martha
Hedman
returning
to



Blanche
Ring
"Broadway
and
Buttermilk,"
Maxine
Elliott's
"The
Boomerang"
Belasco



Frank Craven and Helen MacKeller
"Seven Chances" Cohan

IN WIGS AND WINGS

"Coat-Tales" Deserves Less Severe Censure than That Meted Out.

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

"COAT-TALES" deserves better treatment than it has received at the hands of most of the reviewers. It is not an expert farce, but it is far from slovenly. The fun of farce lies in complication, and Edward Clark's play suffers from too great a store of the life-giving substance.

There was once a burlesque joke, or rather there is a joke, since burlesque recognizes no past tense in humor, concerning a young lady named Ida Noe (pronounced "I dunno"). The first funny man remarks "I gotta girl." The second inquires "What's her name?" and receives the reply "Ida Noe."

The dialogue then follows, something like this:

"You don't know her name?"
"You're a liar, I do. Ida Noe."
"But you just said you didn't."

There is much more, and we remember that we always feared the two comedians never would extricate themselves from their misunderstanding. In fact, as often as not there was no escape except a slapstick or a song number.

Farce writers should avoid Ida Noe situations. It is possible to tangle up characters to such an extent that the audience will lose its sense of fun in puzzlement. The last act of "Coat-Tales" harasses its folk overmuch. Things get so badly tangled that they never do come out, but simply end.

On the other hand, two acts of the new play are excellent. The fun of 1 and 2 is abundant. And farce is probably the most difficult of all dramatic forms from the technical side. We think that "Fair and Warner" is the only expert farce New York has seen in the last two seasons. The difficulty of farce lies in the fact that once the laugh has begun it must be maintained. A spectator may cease from weeping only to cry again, but if he is allowed to lose his appreciation of the comic claims of a farce even for a moment it is difficult to make him laugh again.

The farce writer puts his best material well up in the play, say early in the second act, for a laugh gathers momentum. A tumble might fall flat in Act 1 and yet be ever so funny in the middle of Act 3. This tendency, of course, is in favor of the farce writer. It is easier to make an audience laugh as the play goes on; but, on the other hand, the strain upon the author increases disproportionately. While his second best material may do well enough for the last act, his third best won't, and not infrequently the poor author has used up all but his fourth and fifth best. And so the audience pauses, thinks, and, catching this, remarks: "What utter rot this is, after all." Another farce has been damned.

Life in all its here and there ness beckons to the movie men, but their eyes are fixed on certain set pieces of sentiment. Some day we hope to see

a Mary Pickford film in which the heroine does not give the baby a closeup bath. Babies should wash on their own time, or, at any rate, baths should be heard and not seen. The most needful washing concerns the films themselves. Pictures would be better if the movie authors would agree to scrape off the jam, the sugar and the treacle which lie heavy upon the films. The movies will not grow up until they are done, or less persistently entangled, with curls, teeth, pet kittens, puppies and faithful hounds. And we think they would be better off without purling brooks. The conventions which clutter up the pictures are for the most part unnecessary. Nobody but a movie author believes women are ingenues or vampires, and there are a few persons who can remain indifferent while a young artist starves in his sport shirt.

A little healthy pessimism is what the pictures need. Some day the artist will starve instead of unloading his masterpiece upon a captain of industry. The captain of industry, of course, is distinguished by the big black cigar. He is the man who goes to smash in Reading in the third reel. That is a redeeming feature of the films. It must be admitted that they are bearish toward the stock market, but as for life in general Pippa herself was no more of a bull.

We have noted the phrase in books, in plays and pictures, but we are still waiting to hear somebody exclaim, "Spare no expense."

A bullet fired in a serious film strikes somebody just above the heart. In a Keystone Comedy the projectile bounces off a kidney.

A Year of "The Boomerang." Second year of "The Boomerang"! And a real second year—not one conveniently adopted for advertising purposes. The production at the Belasco has been there since August 10, 1915, and it will soon begin shooting at the mark established by Mr. Manners' "Peg o' My Heart." Martha Hedman, incidentally, returns to the cast this week after a vacation of six weeks.

No actress has been quite so well cast in a number of seasons. Aside from her particular talents for the role, Miss Hedman is physically in entire accord with the scheme of the play. She is placidly beautiful. One usually has to be operated upon to encounter this form of fairness.

There is a little of the eternal trained nurse in every woman, but even so much more in Martha Hedman. Beauty is usually an irritant. No patient's fever would subside if Helen of Troy entered the room when he tugged the bell rope. Yet for all her charm Miss Hedman cheers, but does not inebriate. An excellent actress, we'll wager she'd be a darned good trained nurse.

A COMMUNICATION.

THE dramatic department is in receipt of the following pathetic plea:

Gentlemen: I want to ask a little favor of you. It seems that I am going to have two little girls, cousins from Worcester, Mass., visiting me next week. About a month ago I wrote to them, telling them that if they would come I would take them to the Hippodrome. I thought that I had seen a Hippodrome advertisement stating that it would reopen early in August; now I see a sign which says "early in September." But the little girls are coming and are looking forward to seeing the Hippodrome show with a great deal of pleasure, so their mother writes me.

Now, here is where I want to impose on your good nature. If I can, could you use your influence with the theatrical people to get them to run the show at the Hippodrome on, say, August 10, just as if nothing had happened? Just an afternoon performance would do, and, as the little girls never have seen ANY Hippodrome show, it wouldn't be necessary to put on the new one scheduled for September. I realize that the cast would hardly feel like going in a show in which they were not letter perfect, and, besides, I would not think of putting the Hippodrome people to so much trouble. So it would be all right if they just give last year's show—the skating scene, for instance, and the rose ladder, and perhaps the little dwarfs who did the tumbling. I know the little girls would like that, and it would seem just as good to them as a new show. If you could see the little girls—how cunning they are—you would realize why I hate to disappoint them and why I am asking this rather "nervy" favor of you. Yours truly, ROBERT C. BENCHLEY.

P. S.—Of course, I would expect to pay for my three seats and not "graft" them from you, as I realize that a great many demands are made upon you, and do not care to be a nuisance.

In these days, when so much is being done for the Belgians, it would be a graceful act on the part of the Hippodrome management to endeavor to assist Mr. Benchley in his difficulty. At all events, his letter is referred to Mr. Dillingham in the hope that something can be done about it.

Columbia Theatre.

The Columbia Theatre comes forward with its annual evidence that the theatrical season is on. Another year of burlesque will begin promptly at 2:15 o'clock to-morrow afternoon, when "The Merry Rounders" will move into the Columbia. A weekly change of programme will again be the policy. The company includes Abe Reynolds, George F. Hayes, May Latham, Ruth Wesley, Frank Ward, Eugene McGregor and Elizabeth Jane.

A COUSIN TO DAVID.



Vallie Martin, who has been given a part in "Very Good Eddie" for the joint reasons that she has talent and is Mr. Belasco's cousin.

It's Beginning Again!

"BROADWAY AND BUTTERMILK," to-morrow evening at the Maxine Elliott. This, the second production of the season, is the first of an expected avalanche of plays from the prolific pen of Willard Mack. Not only that, but it serves to bring the bubbling Blanche Ring back to Broadway—if not to buttermilk. Mr. Mack wrote the piece as a straight comedy, under the title of "Jane O'Day from Broadway." When Miss Ring became the star of the production, however, a couple of songs were thrown in for good measure.

"Broadway and Buttermilk" is the story of a metropolitan but kind-hearted milliner who spends a vacation in Killimuck Falls and incidentally takes the village by storm. In the supporting cast will be Helen Lowell, Calvin Thomas, Josephine Morse, Fayette Perry, William P. Carleton, Knute Erickson, Tommy Meade, Charles Withers and Charles Walton. Ben Teal has attended to the staging.

"SEVEN CHANCES," Tuesday evening at George M. Cohan's. With his customary reticence, David Belasco does not permit much advance information to trickle into the papers. It is certain, however, that the piece is a comedy by Roi Cooper Megrue, not entirely unknown as an author, and it would not be surprising to learn that the seven chances were concerned with as many young women. It is also known that the play has three acts.

In the cast are Frank Craven, Otto Kruger, Harry Leighton, Hayward Ginn, Charles Brokate, Rowland Lee, Allen Thomas, the Misses Carroll McComas, Anne Meredith, Marion Abbott, Helen MacKeller, Florence Deshon, Alice Carroll, Lillian Spencer, Emily Callaway, Beverly West and others.

"CHEATING CHEATERS," Wednesday evening at the Eltinge. They call it a "satirical farce melodrama," and the reports from out of town have it that it is all of that. Max Marcin, author of "The House of Glass," will collect the royalties. The entertainment is a detective-crook-gun play in four acts, with one bang on top of another.

Among those present will be Marjorie Rambeau, Cyril Keightley, William Morris, Robert McWade, Edouard Durant, Anne Sutherland, Winifred Harris, Gypsy O'Brien and the customary first-nighters.

"THE SILENT WITNESS," Thursday evening at the Longacre. Here we have a drama by Otto Hauerbach, hitherto a concocter of musical comedy librettos. H. H. Frazee is making the production, and the announcement includes the word "startling."

The cast includes Henry Kolker, not seen hereabouts since "Our Wives"; Paul Everton, David Higgins, DeWitt C. Jennings, Donald Gailaher, Theodore Kehrwald, Henry Duffey, Will Gregory, Richard Hale, S. Hatakenaka, Nathaniel Anderson, Emilie Polini, Miriam Doyle, Maude Gilbert, Florence Neark and Mrs. Jacques Martin.

"YVETTE," Thursday evening at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre. The first out-and-out musical piece of the young season. Benjamin Thorne Gilbert has written the book, and Frederick Herenden has turned out the music and the lyrics. The acts are two in number, and one of the characters is a sausage manufacturer.

The company includes Chapine, who hasn't any other name; John W. Ransome, of blessed memory; Cyril Chadwick, Rose Lehart, Crawford Kent, Rena Parker, Welch C. Homer and Koshanara, Indian dancer.

THE FAME OF ARNOLD.

ARNOLD DALY received a letter last week—just before going on in "Kisses" at the Palace Theatre, according to Walter Kingsley. This was it:

Tokio, Japan, July 6, 1916.

Dear Mr. Arnold Daly:

I have no doubt that you will have certainly astonished in getting the letter from me who am quite a stranger to you. The reason why I have written you this letter is that I have much interesting in cinematograph. I saw "Exploits of Elaine." In my habit my collective heart induce me to collect general photos of famous actors and actresses in the world.

Some European and American actors and actresses kindly accepted my offer in giving me their photos. I regret that I can not to increase your photo in my album. I would thank you to let me have one of your photos and taken having yourself a hand write signature on it. I sincerely trust that you will have no objection in accepting this offer. I thank you in anticipated for you kindly sending me your photos to my collective heart. As my English is not

grammatical and broken I don't know custom of your country. Please excuse me. I am sure that I will always be one of your admirers and friends of Japan.

Yours faithfully,
OCTAVIUS H. HARA,
413 Minamishinagawa
Tokio, Japan.

By way of furnishing a happy ending to the story, it should be added that Mr. Daly "instructed his valet to send his photograph to Mr. Hara."

Stampeders on the Roof. Tuesday evening will be Stampede Night atop the New Amsterdam. Numerous lasso (beg pardon, lariat) artists will be present as the guests of Will Rogers, and will display their prowess with the rope.

American Defence Benefit.

A showing of "The Fall of a Nation" will take place at the Hotel Nassau, Long Beach, next Wednesday evening in aid of the families of Guardsmen at the front. The performance is under the auspices of the American Defence Society.

A LIGHTNING CHANGESS.

ONE thing a woman never can do is to get dressed in a hurry. She can clean a house in ten minutes, prepare a meal in five, scamper through a fortune in no time at all. But for the arduous operation of dressing she requires a period of time that is entirely free from arbitrary boundaries.

In the light of these w. k. facts, when a young woman can make three distinct and complete changes of costume in less than nine minutes the event is worthy of more than passing notice. It is almost epochal. Yet this feat is performed by Ina Claire, of the "Ziegfeld Follies," six nights a week and twice on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

At exactly 10:42 each evening Miss Claire makes her appearance in the dress and attitude of Jane Cowl, the tearful heroine of "Common Clay." Garbed in a simple tailored suit, she occupies the stage one minute to commiserate with the audience on the succession of weepy parts which have befallen Miss Cowl. "Three years ago I had a crying part in 'Within the Law,'" she wails, "and my God! it was a success!" Everybody agrees that Mr. Hobart outdid himself when he composed this line.

Miss Claire devotes exactly sixty seconds to the characterization of Miss Cowl, when she dives through the wings to her special dressing room, erected hard by. Stage hands and scene shifters are on the job to police her path, and great care is taken that no careless piece of property or stray little chorus girl blocks the way in her rush for her room.

Meanwhile, Sam Hardy as Lou-Tellegen has entered to prepare for Miss Claire's second impersonation—that of the athletic prima donna and movie star, Miss Geraldine Farrar. A man in the wings with a stop watch clocked Miss Claire's second entrance in the Spanish garb of Carmen as 10:46:15. She quits the stage at 10:47:50, with her hands struggling to unwind her sash all the way to the dressing room.

Here she rapidly slips into a ballroom creation and a red wig. Her maid accompanies her back through the wings, hooking the dress en route, and just completing her task as Miss Claire enters at 10:51:45 in the role of Billie Burke, the titian-topped actress, who first dramatized pajamas. This characterization is introduced by a pretty sentiment expressed by Allyn King, who says, by way of announcement: "Miss Billie Burke, fairest flower on the screen of time." Here is Mr. Hobart's other clever line, being a direct compliment to Mrs. F. Ziegfeld, jr., wife of the originator and owner of the "Follies."

A reader handy with figures will discover from this score that Miss Claire has occupied slightly less than nine minutes for her three changes, which every suffering husband will agree is a world's record.

F. C. SHANG.

Loew's American Roof.

The programme at Loew's American Theatre and Roof for the first three days of the week will include "The Dream Pirates," a musical comedy; Leo Hilton and Dave Mallon, and Charlie Chaplin's newest, "Once a m." George Bancroft and Octavia Broske will top the bill the latter half of the week, and others will include Billy Tracey and Nat Vincent, song writers; Irving Jones and Roy Johnson and Fred and Annie Pelot.

Glen Islands.

The second month of Glen Islands under the new regime is said to have witnessed the complete transformation of that haven of beauty. Among the attractions are everything that an amusement park should have, with one or two additional thrown in.

Luna Park.

Luna Park has added two thrillers to its free attractions. They are De Phil and De Phil, in a high wire act, and Harry Castel, with a daring motorcycle number.

SHAKING UP THE NEWS

Stage Items as They Never Will Be Sent Out From the Managers' Offices.

By GEORGE S. KAUFMAN.

ONE of the least important announcements made in several months is that "An Open Secret," a drama by Edward Brown, is to be produced in New York in November by Smith and Jones. "An Open Secret" was tried out briefly on the road last season and failed dismally. Reports from out of town, in fact, had it that the play could not have been much worse if all the acts had been played at once.

Very little money is being spent on the production of "An Open Secret," as the management realizes that the play has not a ghost of a chance for success. The scenery, in fact, has been acquired from Cain's storehouse, and will doubtless be immediately recognized by a majority of first nighters. As for the company, there is no one in the cast who comes within seventy-five miles of being a star.

When "The Glittering Princess" opens at the Alhambra Theatre this evening the curtain will ascend some time between 8:30 and 9, despite the announcement in the advertisements that the performance will begin at 8.

"The Broken Ankle" will close at the Buckingham Theatre at the end of this week, the reason being that it has failed to attract the public. The end of the play's New York engagement is not necessitated by the fact that contracts were entered into a long time ago calling for its appearance on the road; it is simply quitting because it isn't making any money.

The latest motion picture sensation, "Sin," will be brought to New York in the fall. There is a great deal of speculation in theatrical circles concerning the identity of the director, as he refuses to allow his name to be used in connection with the publicity campaign.

Mary Leslie will be out of the cast of "Where Am I?" for several weeks on account of illness. Her absence will decidedly weaken the production.

Laura Lyric signed a three years' film contract yesterday at \$60 a week, instead of \$600, as first reported.

"Where Do You Go From Here?" a farce by Percy Mackaye, is scheduled for fall production.

Walter Smythe and Lucille Love, the dancers, have been added to the cast of "The Cherry Sun" in the forthcoming hope that they can save the show.

James Wellman, author of "The Other Cheek," yesterday admitted that he had taken the plot of the piece from "The Left Ear," a play submitted to him by an unknown. The latter will be paid full royalty and will not be compelled to bring suit in order to collect.

Trixie Frigman has been engaged for the role of Nora in the forthcoming revival of "A Doll's House."

THE WEEK'S VAUDEVILLE BILLS

Leaping to Brooklyn—all the way to Coney, in fact—the programme at the New Brighton is headed by Grace La Rue, songstress. Charles Gillen will supply the necessary piano accompaniment. Also on the bill will be Ed Reynard, ventriloquist, returning to vaudeville after four years spent in conducting a hotel, or something, in a combination of ventriloquism and dancing called "Before the Court." In this he will have the assistance of Mme. Bianca.

Others include Andrew Tombs and Lola Wentworth; "Cranberries," a playlet; the Primrose Four, who sing, as you might expect; Violinsky, the Crisps and the Australian Wood Choppers.

The programme at Henderson's Music Hall will include Emily Francis Hooper and Joseph Herbert, jr.; Mildred Richardson, prima donna; Dwyer and Fay, in "What's It All About?"; "Mr. Inquisitive," a miniature musical comedy; Howard, Kibel and Herbert; the Metropolitan Dancing Sextet, Comfort and King and the Costa Troupe.

The Prospect, as has come to be the custom, will break the week in the middle, offering new bills to-morrow and Thursday.